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# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 13/82)



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## NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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### CONTENTS

#### POLITICAL

##### INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

- Concept of Maghreb Parliament Supported  
(Habib Boulares; JEUNE AFRIQUE, 10 Feb 82)..... 1

##### IRAN

- Briefs  
    New Office 3  
    Ammunition Supply 3

##### LEBANON

- Sa'ib Salam Interviewed on Elections  
(Sa'ib Salam Interview; AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI,  
22-28 Jan 82)..... 4
- Syria Seeks To Extend Sarkis' Term  
(AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 29 Jan-4 Feb 82)..... 9

##### SYRIA

- Publication Gives Details of Recent Coup Plot  
(AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 12-18 Feb 82)..... 13
- Diplomat Blamed for Magazine Bombing  
(AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI, 22-25 Jan 82)..... 19
- Briefs  
    Attempt To Smuggle Arms Foiled 20

- a -

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POLITICAL

INTER-ARAB AFFAIRS

CONCEPT OF MAGHREB PARLIAMENT SUPPORTED

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1101, 10 Feb 82 p 21

[Commentary by JEUNE AFRIQUE adviser Habib Boulares: "For a Maghreb Parliament"]

[Text] "The source of everyone's pain is also the subject of everyone's attack." This verse of Corneille can certainly constitute a basis for Colonel Qadhdhafi's meditation. King Hassan with a rare vigor accused Colonel Qadhdhafi of every sin. The Algerians have received him, from 18 to 23 January, with a discreetness that bordered on indifference. The Tunisians treated him as a tourist of a certain notoriety (J.A. No 1100). His idea of a union with Algeria did not create any enthusiasm in President Chadli Bendjedid's entourage. However, to know what happened in Algiers we can only rely on what was made public by the Libyan sources.

We must admit that Tunisia has reasons to fear the intensive training in Libya of approximately 10,000 of its nationals. Algeria discovered to its surprise that Algerians are also being trained in Libyan camps. This has created, for the time being, nothing but a shrug. However, this was not the case a few months ago when Libyan soldiers positioned themselves to the south beyond their borders in Algerian territory. They were requested sharply to go camp elsewhere.

Union by force has no greater chance of succeeding than the direct occupation of the land. The attempt at persuasion through dialogue does not seem to have borne more fruit in Algiers than in Jerba. Furthermore, there is something confusing about this "Guide of the revolution" who has proposed a union at times to Bourguiba and at times to Bendjedid, while at the same time asserting to the public that union among Arabs can be accomplished only through the people and by bypassing the leaders and governments.

No! Following Qadhdhafi's visit to Algeria and his passage thru Tunisia, the idea of Pan-Arab union, or that of a Greater Maghreb, has not evolved.

However, we have to admit that Qadhdhafi is not the only cause. Surely, without Libya, as Hassan II stated, the Saharan war could not have lasted that long. Algeria certainly gives the impression that it is trying to find a way out of the conflict. Nevertheless the Polisario is today a political and military force that intends to use all its potential to prevent it from being sacrificed during a referendum or a multilateral negotiation.

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Mauritania distrusts Morocco and the time has passed when an understanding between Rabat and Nouakchott could have paved the way to a peaceful solution. The Saharan question is at an impasse, and the latest declarations of the King of Morocco have not been encouraging.

Who can in these circumstances endorse and advance the concept of a Maghreb union? Qadhdhafi speaks action of the masses, and his target is a Pan-Arab union. The Tunisian jurist Mohamed Charfi, who animates the "Maghreb Encounters," considers the separate actions of the rulers and the people to be insufficient, and advocates their union. This is the path of wisdom. Nevertheless, this concept can only take shape if an organization is willing to endorse it.

However, until now there is a framework that has not been used, i.e., parliamentary action. Why not actively support a North African parliament, a Maghreb assembly, where the parliaments of Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya can send their representatives? Why can't this parliament, based on the example of the European Parliament, be established in a central city, which is not a capital of a state, e.g., Constantine, this Cirta of ancient Numidia which had its moment of glory during the time of Massinissa and Jugurtha?

Parliaments constitute, despite their limited freedom of action, ideal fora for open debates that would permit the clarification of the rulers' actions. It is in such a forum that the supporters and the adversaries of a united, federated or confederated Maghreb can confront each other without such a confrontation turning into a war. It is here that the peoples' action through their representatives, and the rulers through their parties, can combine their efforts to spread an idea that all the crises were unable to bury because everyone continued to believe in it.

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IRAN

BRIEFS

NEW OFFICE--There is a new office for Iranian embassies, that for "Dissemination and Explanation of the principles of the Islamic Revolution." The directors of these new services are carefully chosen by the High Council of the Guardians of the Revolution. The first post so provided is London. Paris and Bonn will follow. [Text] [Paris L'EXPRESS in French 5-11 Mar 82 p 85] [COPYRIGHT: 1982 s.a. Groupe Express]

AMMUNITION SUPPLY--A number of Khomeyni's generals telephone their counterparts in Israel regularly to specify their needs of ammunition and spare parts and ask advice from their former instructors. These messages go through Rome and are received in a few minutes. [Text] [Paris L'EXPRESS in French 12-18 Mar 82 p 89] [COPYRIGHT: 1982 s.a. Groupe Express]

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LEBANON

SA'IB SALAM INTERVIEWED ON ELECTIONS

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 258, 22-28 Jan 82 pp 32-33

[Interview with Sa'ib Salam in Beirut by AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI; date not specified]

[Text] Sa'ib Salam, former prime minister and a leader of the Islamic Coalition, is one of Lebanon's most courageous and hardline Muslim leaders. Mr Salam, a supporter of Prime Minister Shafiq al-Wazzan, is known for his outspokenness and a disposition to call a spade a spade, often to the ire or embarrassment of others.

Our first question centered on the American and Soviet positions on the Lebanese crisis as gleaned from the visits of the two countries' envoys [to Lebanon] last year. Mr Salam had this to say:

"Competition between the two superpowers in all parts of the world continues. It is becoming more acute in the Middle East. The new American republican administration says its first priority is to stop the extension of Soviet influence in the Arab world and the Middle East. But all American actions are so absolutely stupid that they are producing the opposite effect: opening the door wide to the growth of Soviet influence. Foremost among these actions is Washington's insistence on continuing the policy of blind support for Israel which that country has enjoyed since its birth.

"Because I met with Philip Habib, I know more about his mission than that of the Russian envoy. We discussed all topics, but his foremost concern, as I discovered, was to strengthen the ceasefire.

"My interpretation of his preoccupation with the ceasefire is that the U.S. wants to maintain the present situation, that is, one that, while not exactly calm, is free of major eruptions until next April, the deadline for settling the Sinai issue.

"In brief, here is what I told Habib: 'Go to America and look for a solution there. You will not find one here? The solution is not here, but there. By this I mean that a solution can be found only if America changes its policy and frees itself from Israeli domination. This is the way to safeguard America's interests in the region and in the Arab world.

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"The Soviet envoy came to register his presence; his main concern, apparently, was to exploit America's mistakes for some new [Soviet] purpose."

[Question] It is rumored that in addition to his concentration on [strengthening] the ceasefire, Philip Habib wanted to explore the possibility of a Syrian pullout from greater Beirut. Do you support such a move?

[Answer] The only thing I know about this is what I read in the newspapers. I talked with Habib for over 2 hours. We discussed all issues and all aspects of each issue. From what I could see, Habib's only obsession was to strengthen the ceasefire. He did not even mention the Syrian missiles in Lebanon--and neither did I. The way I see it, America is confused, and its confusion is due to the tension in Israel and much of the Arab world. America is worried that this tension might lead to an explosion that could threaten next April's [Sinai] deal.

Who Represents the Muslims?

[Question] In the western zone [of Beirut] the problem of security is tangled in politics. People are clamoring for representation. Is the Islamic Coalition the only representative of the Muslim community?

[Answer] There is not only one representative for the Muslim community. When the conflict in Lebanon reached the stage of violence, and when foreign propaganda, abetted by the Zionists, portrayed the situation as a confrontation between the Christian Right and the Muslim Left, we were deeply hurt. The majority of Muslims did not rush to arms just to enter into a violent confrontation, but rather because there was no choice. From the outset we made our position clear: violence was not the answer to the Lebanese problem. Several long years of destruction and a great toll of human life have yet to solve our problem, just as we had predicted. We were also dismayed to have the Muslims portrayed as Leftist. Not only are the Muslims not Leftist--in the sense of being terror-bent communists directed from outside the country, as the term is understood here--but they are anti-Left. That is why we established our coalition and why we named it the Islamic Coalition: to deprive the real Leftists of the right to speak in our name. We have succeeded to some extent in undermining the synonymity of the terms Leftist and Muslim in the minds of the people and to discredit those who claim to speak for us. Now, when a Leftist or a communist representative attempts to speak in the name of the Muslims he is ridiculed in and outside Lebanon. (As a further measure of our success, Leftist and communist announcements are now made in the name of the National Forces rather than the Muslims.)

While the Islamic Coalition does not pretend to speak for the Muslim community, its actions over the past 6 years have always been a more accurate expression of the will and aspirations of that community. In this respect, anyone who expresses the will and the aspirations of the Muslims can be termed a representative of the Muslim community.

I agree with your description of the security situation in the western zone [West Beirut]. Those who seek control of the area are divided. They collide

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inside and outside the area; the victims, unfortunately, are the residents of the area. While the various factions claim to be concerned with security in the area, they, themselves, are the cause of lawlessness. They are responsible for the explosions, assassinations and uncountable breaches of security. This is not my view alone. The prevailing view is that the head of the so-called National Movement is responsible for chaos in the western zone.

[Question] You say the army is the vital element in the search for a compromise solution. Can the army, with its current composition, bring security to all parts of the country?

[Answer] Let us look at the question from a different perspective. I have indicated earlier that the Lebanese people, Christians and Muslims, are anxious to get together in an effort to save their country. This is the objective of the "national compromise" movement. Many say "compromise before security," but those who advocate this course are misguided and simplistic, or they are misguiders who want to maintain the troubled situation. Every rational person knows that one cannot have compromise unless there is a legal authority that can provide security, and the only way for the legal authority to provide security is through the army. Here is where the problem begins. The government has not been able to convince the groups opposed to the army to let the army carry out its security duties. The opposition is completely internal; some of the opposition is directed from outside [the country].

The roads from east Beirut to west Beirut are closed because certain factions do not want the Muslims and the Christians to get together. I am convinced that if the Christians and Muslims were left alone, many would suffocate in the rush to embrace. They all want peace. That is why I support the army and want to see it strengthened. There were times of small or significant disagreements with the army, nevertheless I have always continued to work for the creation of a strong army. Those who oppose the army use any pretext to reject it. The truth is that they do not want an army in the first place. Many would criticize the army for being "unbalanced," a term they invited to misguide people. When most people rejected this depiction of the army, the opposition admitted that they have misused the "unbalanced" adjective.

It is essential that we have a strong army based on a national foundation. I invite my Maronite brethren to discourage the idea of "Maronizing" the army. We must have a Lebanese Army, and it must remain Lebanese if it is to succeed in extending the legal authority [of the government] to all parts of Lebanon. In view of the collapse of civil and security [police] authority, the army is the only arm of the state that can restore legal authority.

I Support Sarkis

[Question] You were among the first to "open fire" on the government and to accuse it of poor performance. Suddenly and unexpectedly you are opening a new leaf with him [President Sarkis]. What are your real reasons?

[Answer] I am surprised at your use of the terms "suddenly" and "open fire." I have always had some disagreements with the government, but my position has

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always been made clear and in an open manner. Everything I say openly I have said to the president in face-to-face meetings. I have always insisted that the president take the initiative, particularly after things worsened in the wake of the Riyadh Conference. That conference involved things that exceeded the president's constitutional powers, but we overlooked that because we wanted to save the country by any means. We supported the president and I was the first to do so. You refer to my criticism of the president but forget that I was the first to support him when he assumed the presidency. We requested the president to move on behalf of Lebanon. We asked him to go to Washington, to Moscow and to the UN. Even when Lebanon itself became the problem, they [the outside world] continued to point to the Palestinian problem despite the fact that we were the first to shoulder the burden of the Palestinian problem and continue to do so today as much as the Palestinians themselves. Now Lebanon has a problem and we must concentrate on it. Yasir 'Arafat constantly moves from capital to capital in search of a solution to his problem. King Hussayn [of Jordan] does the same thing. That was the point of my criticism. The moment the president began to move, however--by taking part in the First Tunis Conference, the Ta'if Islamic Conference, and the Second Tunis Conference, followed by his decision to reactivate the Arab Follow-up Committee--it became my duty to support him. When he explained Lebanon's position at the Ta'if Conference and was subsequently assailed by those who wish to perpetuate the Lebanon crisis, I found it my duty to support him. I was pleased to note that for the first time the president and the prime minister were working cooperatively, something I had repeatedly called for in the past.

Not once during the 4 years of [former] Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss' tenure did I withhold my support. On the contrary, my support was unqualified. I also supported Prime Minister al-Wazzan. I even defended Prime Minister al-Hoss, and, if I may say so, repeatedly. I did not, however, always take his side in his counterproductive, nonstop dispute with the president. I am a positivist by nature and temperament and favor a positivistic approach to work. When I noted that the president and Prime Minister al-Wassan were working cooperatively, I gave them my support. It is wrong to say that the prime minister is not his own man because he cooperates with the president, who in turn is a tool of the Phalange Party, which in turn is a tool of Israel. By this "logic," al-Wassan is an Israeli tool. This is the logic of those who do not wish Lebanon well.

This is why I have supported President Sarkis' moves on behalf of Lebanon. It is my duty to support him against his assailants of ill will.

[Question] Prime Minister al-Wassan is the target of a campaign to remove him from office. Do you favor that his government remain in power till the end of its term?

[Answer] In my opinion, Prime Minister al-Wazzan is doing his best. The prime minister's job is difficult under the best of circumstances, and is much more so now. Not only do I oppose a change of government now, but I support Prime Minister al-Wazzan's government. Those who want to replace al-Wazzan want to destroy rather than rebuild Lebanon.

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I Oppose Extending President's Term

[Question] The presidential election campaign has already begun. You are a very close friend of General Raymond Iddih. What are his chances of becoming the next president?

[Answer] It is known that I have in the past supported General Iddih for the presidency. I did not support him on the basis of his friendship alone--a friendship of which I am proud--but because of his patriotism. He is a capable man, one who can shoulder the burden of the presidency. Should I support his bid again, it would be for the same reasons. He is patriotic, capable and inspires confidence; and these attributes qualify him for the presidency. Nevertheless, there are others who have these attributes and who are equally qualified. There is a saying in Lebanon that "every Maronite is a candidate for the presidency," but there will be many changes before election time. A group of people has of late been calling for amending the constitution and holding the elections now. I have opposed this group and succeeded in silencing it. Why? Because the situation in Lebanon and in the region at large is not clear and will remain so until next April, pending the resolution of the Sinai problem. The situation will become clear then in Lebanon and the region. No one knows whether the Sinai will be returned [to Egypt] or not. If the Israelis do not withdraw, the situation will change. If they withdraw, we will still face a new situation. Furthermore, why should we advance the elections when the constitution stipulates that elections take place 2 months before the president's term ends? That is not till next July. Let us wait till after the Sinai return to see how things develop and what effect they will have on Lebanon.

[Question] The possibility of extending his term of office has been raised with Mr Sarkis. Do you support such a move?

[Answer] I am against the idea and believe Mr Sarkis himself is also opposed to it.

[Question] It is rumored that Mr Philip Habib has proposed the idea. Is that true?

[Answer] I read that in the papers, but I have not heard it from any reliable source. All this, however, must await Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

[Question] In the wake of the Fez Conference, what do you foresee for southern Lebanon?

[Answer] Many like to portray the Fez Conference to the outside world as a great tragedy. I do not agree with this portrayal and believe it harms the Arab cause. I simply say the conference did not succeed and its failure was expected. While I had expected the conference to fail, the objectives of the conference remain valid. These objectives are yet to be fulfilled.

While saying farewell to Mr Sa'ib Salam, he asked me to convey his greetings to Professor Walid and to inform him that he [Mr Salam] had read Mr Walid's interview with President Saddam Hussayn [of Iraq] and was very impressed with it.

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LEBANON

SYRIA SEEKS TO EXTEND SARKIS' TERM

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 259, 29 Jan-4 Feb 82 pp 36-37

[Article: "Barter Transaction Between Sarkis and Damascus"]

[Text] After the session of the Arab Follow-Up Committee was postponed until the first part of next March, talk began about a Sarkis-Syrian "deal" in connection with the presidential election campaign, which can be summarized as establishing "special and privileged relations" between Lebanon and Syria, in exchange for Syrian support for Sarkis either to extend his term or to determine any alternative as president. What about the new deal? Postponing the meeting of the Arab Follow-Up Committee until March might be the start of abandoning the committee, and consequently cancelling its meetings, unless positive developments suddenly appear on the Lebanese scene, leading to a move to convene, and an adjustment in the climate leading to implementation of the resolutions previously issued by the committee.

Ministerial sources say in this regard that, since the last meeting held by the committee, Lebanon has lost hope for the possibility of achieving any progress toward solving the crisis at this stage, since many problems, including the "Syrian problem" have prevented any progress to speak of. Consequently, the member nations in the committee (Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) have been forced to be tantamount to "false witnesses," because these states know the Syrian positions and reasons that are blocking Lebanese accord. Nevertheless, they have been forced to disregard the reasons which are too numerous to mention.

The sources add that if Syria carries a share of the responsibility for the failure of the Arab solution, other parties in Lebanon, such as the Lebanese Front, the National Movement and the Palestinian Resistance also carry a portion of the responsibility, for selfish or personal reasons.

These sources say that the highest authorities told some of the leadership a few days before the date to convene the Follow-Up Committee that it was the Arab parties' intention, especially Lebanon, to postpone the date for the committee's meeting. When the Kuwaiti foreign minister, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, excused himself from attending, along with Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, Lebanon was sure that the meeting had become passe. When the Saudi position

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was sounded out, the reply came back that the Riyadh government preferred to postpone the Follow-Up Committee's meeting, because none of its resolutions could be achieved on the spot. Lebanon's position was similar. When Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam came on a sudden visit to Beirut, carrying a message from President Hafiz al-Asad to Lebanese President Ilyas Sarkis on 17 December, the picture became very clear. He was conveying the other Arab positions. They had no objections to the postponement.

Postponement or Abolishment?

Ministerial sources say that Lebanon preferred not to go on record as being for a meeting without results. The meeting, if held even with the attendance of the foreign ministers, was not capable of producing new and decisive decisions, especially since the existing decisions are still just ink on paper. Therefore, how could it be productive if held with the attendance of other ministers, representing the foreign ministers, who would not be conversant with the developments and nuances of the Lebanese situation.

These sources disclosed that Saudi Arabia and Kuwait had told Lebanon, about a week before the date of the Follow-Up Committee meeting, that they would not participate in the committee meeting, at the foreign minister level, unless the two previous decisions issued by the committee were implemented. They are:

1. To open the traffic lanes in the Sodeco area.
2. To form a Lebanese security force, under the command of the minister of the interior, Prime Minister Shariq al-Wazzan, to take charge of maintaining security on both sides of the confrontation line from the Sodeco area down to the al-Marafa' quarter.

These two measures are considered sufficient to cool off the security situation, which would encourage the Lebanese government and the Arab parties participating in the Follow-Up Committee, through their representatives in Beirut, to prepare for the dialogue, and then the national accord.

These sources think that postponing the meeting of the Follow-Up Committee until March may be the start of finally abolishing the committee's role, especially since there is no evidence on the horizon to indicate the possibility of achieving any progress toward implementing its previous decisions. This means the failure of the Arab solution, by virtue of the fact that the Follow-Up Committee represents locally, Arab-wise and internationally the only way to deal with the Lebanese crisis. Lebanon was betting on the Arab solution, for fear that it would get involved in other solutions, especially international solutions.

Lebanon believes, as President Sarkis told the members of the Follow-Up Committee at their last meeting, that the aspirations and hopes that were pinned on the committee have been lowered a great deal from what they once were right after its formation at the Tunis summit. The reason, according to President Sarkis, is that the committee has shifted from dealing with the

fateful issue as a whole, since it was charged with dealing with the Lebanese situation in its entirety, with its Arab and Palestinian ramifications, to dealing with trivialities, such as opening the roads and removing the barricades, while not coming close to the nub of the Lebanese problem. Official Lebanon has tried to shift the consensus of the committee to a more effective and comprehensive level, through a working paper which it submitted and which proposed solutions for various political and security issues, including the national dialogue leading to accord. However, the committee preferred not to plunge into the details of the Lebanese working paper, because that would require specific positions from the various parties influencing the Lebanese scene (Syria, the Palestinian Resistance, the UN forces and the local parties). This could have reached specific political sensitivities between these parties and the Arab member states on the Follow-Up Committee.

#### Privileged Relations

At this time, informed sources told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI that Syrian Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam arrived to discuss with President Ilyas Sarkis how to "normalize" special relations on the official level between Syria and Lebanon. He perceived from the Lebanese president a desire to comply with this request (?). He is the one who, so far, has rejected even a discussion of subjects like this, being anxious about the factors of Lebanese sovereignty, or what is left of it.

Those in the know say that President Sarkis, who is nearing the end of his term, is trying to ensure Damascus' support for himself, his methods and his programs. At the same time, he is trying to exchange "special relations" for the withdrawal of Syria from Beirut and certain suburbs, which would permit peaceful presidential elections. The president might go as far as exchanging security information with the Syrians, in addition to better economic coordination and coordination of political positions on the international scene, for the purpose of ensuring this withdrawal.

In the context of the presidential campaign, which is preoccupying the Lebanese more than at any time, those who are striving to bring the points of view of Damascus and Raymond Iddah closer together note that Syrian-Phalangist relations are not as bad as some imagine. As evidence of that, Muhammad Ghanim, director of Syrian Intelligence says in his private meetings that Syria has not yet lost hope for the return of the Phalangists to "the husband's house." However, this return would have to be deferred, if Israel continues in its intransigence with regard to the Golan annexation or if it intends to launch a new attack against South Lebanon.

The statements that have been attributed to Phalangist officials recently bear out the belief that there is a tacit Syrian-Phalangist understanding to extend President Sarkis' term, with specific security arrangements, such as deploying the army in the eastern area and handing over security in the Western area to the internal security forces, while awaiting propitious international circumstances to strengthen the Syrian-Phalangist solidarity on the level of comprehensive solutions.

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#### Arab Reservations

In this context, observers have noted that the routine extension of the Arab Deterrent Force in Lebanon has not met with any Phalangist opposition this time. Perhaps this Phalangist "silence" played a part in facilitating the mission of Phillip Habib, the American envoy, who returned to the area to ensure the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian cease-fire, and to ensure the legal formalities of the presidential elections, or the extension of the present president. However, there are those who talk about the "contradiction" between the Phalangist position and the position of the Maronite Patriarchy in this regard, since the patriarch says that Maronites in Lebanon must not consent to any measure which would amend the written constitution, such as an extension for President Sarkis, for example.

Phillip Habib has in fact returned for three political purposes:

--Follow-up the coordination between the Syrians and the Phalangists.

--To cool off Syrian-Israeli relations, after the "scenario" of Israeli orbiting over the Biqa' and the rumors about Syrian "SAM" missiles being fired at the Israeli aircraft...without hitting them, of course.

--Preparation for the election campaign, in light of President Sarkis' position regarding the extension.

Perhaps the Syrian and Lebanese presidents will both find it necessary to meet at this stage (in the second half of February in all probability) before the reconvening of the Arab Follow-Up Committee, to review the situation in the region as a whole and the role of the deterrent forces in the future stage, which will follow the Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai.

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SYRIA

#### PUBLICATION GIVES DETAILS OF RECENT COUP PLOT

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 261, 12-18 Feb 82 pp 22-23

[Article: "Names of Officers Arrested in Coup Attempt; Entire MiG Squadron Tasked With Bombing Defense Company Bases and the Republican Palace"]

[Text] Was American Intelligence the one that uncovered the recent coup attempt in Syria, as compensation to the Syrian regime for the American position in the Golan case? This is the information that was leaked at least by Western diplomats, in a letter that AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI received from Washington, which also included previously unpublished information about the officers who carried out the attempt, their names and their military responsibilities.

When the Syrian authorities confirmed that they do not expect an Israeli attack on the Syrian army in Lebanon, what was the justification for these assurances? The evidence is the information which was leaked by sources well-connected to the American State Department to the effect that none other than American intelligence gave the Syrian regime the details of the recent coup attempt, and provided it with the names of the officers and civilians who had prepared it, for the purpose of "saving face" for the Golan case, after the recent American veto in the United Nations.

It can be said that American-Syrian relations are not as bad as some may think, and that Washington has not yet lost hope in the Syrian card in the coming negotiations that will follow the withdrawal from Sinai.

In light of this fact, Washington is still covering the Syrian role in Lebanon. It is a role which is in direct agreement with the logic of "red lines," by which the Syrians and Israelis deal with the Lebanese crisis and for which, sometimes, the Lebanese and Palestinians pay a price.

#### Liquidations

American diplomatic circles are talking about the American "watchfulness" in Damascus, which presupposes that there is a Soviet eye in the area. These circles confirm the information that the number of Syrian officers, who were arrested after the coup attempt, ranged between 180 and 220 of various branches of service and ranks, including about 30 officers of the rank of major

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general, brigadier general and colonel. There was also a number of retired officers and about 50 civilians.

The arrests included most of the important corps and units of the Syrian army, but were concentrated largely among pilots of the Air Force, the naval forces, armored divisions, command officers in the Syrian Chief of Staff office, the engineering corps, some officers of the military survey unit and a small number of officers of the defense companies, whose names are not known.

The information indicates that Brig Gen Muhammad al-Khuli, the director of air force intelligence and an advisor to President Hafiz al-Asad, personally supervised the arrests with the assistance of military intelligence, headed by Brig Gen 'Ali Duba. It was learned from some informed sources and from those who had a connection with the investigation, conducted in strict secrecy by the Syrian authorities, that some of the arrested officers were required to talk by telephone with their wives and families and pretend that they had suddenly been sent on special military matters to Lebanon with the deterrent forces, in order to give the authorities more opportunity to arrest those whose names had been provided by the officers who were connected with the coup attempt.

The names of some of the arrested officers have been leaked. A number of them were liquidated by firing squad after their interrogation. The following were known to be among them:

Maj Gen Marwan al-Juqdar from Damascus, who held the post of assistant chief of staff and director of training in the Syrian army.

Brig Gen Ahmad 'Abd al-Nabi, from the Third Armored Division Command.

Brig Gen Ibrahim al-Malki, who was described as director of operations for the Fifth Division.

Brig Gen Salih Hallawah, one of the senior officers of the First Armored Division.

The name of Brig Gen Ibrahim al-Safi was repeatedly mentioned among those arrested; he is an 'Alawite, previously known to be a supporter of Sallah Jadid. However, President al-Asad appointed him as commander of the First Armored Division, and he was leading this division on 22 November 1980, the day the Syrians mobilized forces on the Jordanian border. His division was one of the main divisions concentrated on the border.

#### The Plan

The information confirms that 40 officers from the Air Force were arrested, including five high-ranking officers. It has been confirmed that at least four of them were brigadier generals. They also included some 25 pilots, and known to be among them, Lt Col 'Assaf 'Assaf. The commander of one of the MiG-17 squadrons was also arrested, along with most of his pilots. There was also a number of air base commanders, including the commander of

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one of the helicopter bases and the commanders of one of the other air wings close to Damascus. The name of Lt Col Haytham, one of Brig Gen Muhammad al-Khuli's aides, was also bruited about by those arrested. The arrest of Brig Gen Taysir Lutfi al-Hamawi has been confirmed, and it was said that he was executed a week after his arrest. He held the post of army operations in Office of the Chief of Staff.

Damascus' information states that some Christian Ba'thist officers were also arrested or discharged from service. A small number of 'Alawite officers, from the First and Third Armored Divisions, were also arrested, as well as some from the Seventh Armored Division. However, it is so far apparent that most of the officers confirmed to be either arrested or executed were from Damascus, Hamah, Dayr al-Zawr, Aleppo and Homs.

Reports have been gathering to the effect that these officers were preparing a major coup attempt, beginning with air bombardment of the defense companies' headquarters and main camps, followed by bombing the Republican Palace, the party's national headquarters, the Central Committee and the headquarters of the Air Force and Intelligence. Then some armored units, based close to Damascus at al-Kiswah and al-Qabun camps, would move on the capital to occupy the vital centers there and take control of the government.

## Discharges

It has been confirmed that scores of senior Syrian army officers were discharged before the start of the recent arrests. These were officers who were cleared of any connection with the coup attempt. These dismissals included a large number of officers of the Air Defense Corps and the naval forces in Latakia and Tartus, as well as several senior officers from the Supreme Military College, including 10 officers of the rank of major general, about 20 brigadiers, and some other ranks such as colonel, lieutenant colonel and major. Those identified include Brig Gen Lutfi Mikha'il Haddad, Brig Gen 'Izmi 'Adi, both from the naval forces in Latakia, Maj Gen Ghazi al-Jabi and Brig Gen 'Abdullah Nummar, both from the Supreme Academy for Military Science, and some officers from some of the infantry brigades, the missile and artillery forces and the air force, including Brig Gen (pilot) Mu'taz Barbuh and Lt Col (Infantry) Salim al-Hushaysh.

## The Free Ba'thist Officers

Another aspect of the attempt was contained in the information given to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI to the effect that the investigation revealed a new military organization within the Syrian army, bearing the name of the "Free Ba'thist Officers." The leader of this organization committed suicide, as soon as he was discovered, while Maj Gen Naji Jamil was being interrogated and as soon as President al-Asad postponed his execution.

The discovery of the organization came about in stages, starting, to be precise, on the afternoon of 5 January, when the commander of President Hafiz al-Asad's special security guard granted permission by telephone to one of his officers to take leave because of illness.

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However, the special military intelligence organization urgently reported to the president that evening that a surveillance force, subordinate to it, reported that one of the president's security guard officers, i.e., the "sick" officer, had been seen in a meeting on the outskirts of Damascus with Staff Col Harb al-Samman, who for more than 3 months had been under intense surveillance, because of his suspicious movements within the armored corps to which he belonged. In addition, he had warm friendships with some of the youthful air corps pilots.

At dawn the next day, forces from the defense companies raided the home of the guard officer. During the meticulous search, a large quantity of pamphlets were seized, which attacked the regime and called for its overthrow. They bore the signature of the "Free Ba'thist Officers."

The special guard officer was interrogated for 3 days, during which he was subjected to severe torture. He finally confessed the names of seven fellow members of the "Free Ba'thist Officers," including Col al-Samman, who was described as the leader of the organization.

All those whose names were given by the guard officer were arrested, except for al-Samman who remained free under intense surveillance, so that he could be the trap for other officers who might contact him.

#### Periods of Torture

The investigation, which was accompanied by periods of torture for 5 full days, was only able to obtain from those six arrested officers the names of 18 other officers from various army corps who were members of that organization. The shock that jolted the regime was that three of those arrested held leadership posts in the defense companies and that 11 of them were 'Alawites. All of them held party membership. In addition, one of them during interrogation mentioned the name of Maj Gen Najji Jamil, who was mentioned in some of the meetings as being an outside supporter.

Najji Jamil was arrested and interrogated at the defense companies' headquarters. He was later transferred to the Republican Palace, where President al-Asad personally interrogated him. Najji Jamil denied knowing anything about this organization or having contacts with it. However, he did confess that he had heard, as others had heard, rumors about hostile movements in the armed forces, although he had paid them no attention, and therefore, he saw no reason to tell the authorities, since they were merely rumors.

Rifa't al-Asad believed that because of what Najji Jamil had candidly confessed, he deserved to be executed. However, President al-Asad, who considered Najji Jamil to be guilty, refused to execute him on the grounds that that would shed light on the rebellion within the armed forces against the regime, which could lead to serious complications.

Intense surveillance of Col al-Samman produced no results. It was obvious that al-Samman had detected the surveillance, and had suspended his activities and had cut off all contact with the officers and his friends and companions.

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On 18 January, the order was issued to arrest Col al-Samman. When the defense companies' force raided his home, he drew his pistol against the commander of the force. The orders carried by this officer required him to arrest al-Samman alive, no matter what the cost. The force remained in its positions, unable to move against Col al-Samman, for more than 3 hours, during which time the district in which the house was located was blockaded.

Suddenly Col al-Samman raised the pistol to his head and said: "You will not take me, and you will not learn anything. If we have failed this time, there will be another time, and we will succeed!" He fired a bullet into his head and fell to the ground.

A secret and swift military trial was held, after which a sentence of execution was issued against 19 of the arrested officers, while six others were sentenced to dismissal from the service and prison terms ranging between 10 and 15 years. The sentences were in fact carried out on the same day that Maj Gen Najj Jamil was seen on television, in an indirect attempt to refute the reports, circulating within the armed forces and political circles in the Syrian community, about the discovery of a revolutionary organization of army officers working to overthrow the regime, and about the connection of Maj Gen Najj Jamil with them.

However, the regime is still doing all it can to carry out a campaign of arrests and widespread purges within the army and the defense companies, and to discover the answer to the question that is haunting it: What is the organization of "Free Ba'thist Officers."

#### Other Details

Regarding other details about the abortive attempt, the disturbances that occurred in Syria last month, and which still continue, caused the Syrian president to cancel his trip to Arab North Africa. Foreign correspondents who had gone to Syria reported that there were severe battles between units of Maj Gen 'Ali Aslan, one of the advisors to the Syrian army chief of staff, and special forces, subordinate to Rifa't al-Asad, near the town of Duma, and that Aslan's forces had shelled Rifa't al-Asad's headquarters in that town.

Information was also reported that the Syrian authorities had banned foreign correspondents and photographers from covering some of the locations of these incidents. They took away their documents and cameras upon arrival in Damascus, at the same time that some Syrian civilians were watching a large migration to the mountains, out of fear of renewed disturbances. An armored unit has been permanently deployed around the Republican Palace in Damascus, while President al-Asad has sent his children to his village of al-Qardahah, his birthplace, in Jabal al-'Alawin.

At the same time, a group of Syrian special forces was withdrawn from Lebanon in two batches: the first time, 8,000 troops were withdrawn, and the second time, 2,000 troops were sent to Damascus.

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In any event, the size of the "conspiracy" is clear evidence that the Syrian opposition is not confined to Ba'thist circles, nor to the Muslim Brotherhood, nor to any specific sect or quarter. There is evidence that those who carried it out belong to various sects. They are active military and retired, as well as civilians, who form the active national foundation for the popular opposition. The Syrian authorities today can of course be forgiven if they feel less than reassured about the loyalty of the military establishment, whether in Syria or in Lebanon.

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SYRIA

DIPLOMAT BLAMED FOR MAGAZINE BOMBING

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 258, 22-28 Jan 82 p 16

[Text] AL-WATAN-AL-'ARABI has learned from a diplomatic source here that the French Foreign Ministry has forwarded to the French ambassador in Damascus, a complete file on the Syrian diplomat Mikha'il (nicknamed Michel), Kasuha, who is believed to be responsible for the unsuccessful attempt to bomb the offices of AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI. The file reportedly contains documents and evidential materials linking the Syrian diplomat to the crime. It has been confirmed that the French ambassador to Damascus last week turned over the file to officials of the Syrian Foreign Ministry in Damascus. AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI features the first artist's sketch of the accused diplomat on this issue's front cover. It is known that Mikha'il Kasuha, born in Homs in 1948, first entered France in October 1980 as a cultural adviser to the Syrian Embassy in France. He did not serve in this capacity, however, but concentrated instead on his other mission, the one having nothing to do with cultural affairs. AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI was the first to disclose his real mission following the assassination of Salah al-Bitar and Banan al-'Attar. The question now is why the French authorities failed to expel him immediately as a persona non grata. The answer lies in diplomatic conventions which bar expulsion except when a diplomat is caught in the act, which was not the case in the Kasuha incident. In such situations, the authorities where the crime takes place merely inform the other country's authorities of all legal evidence linking the diplomat to the crime, in the hope that the offender would be withdrawn by his own country. When such action is delayed, the host country orders the diplomat to leave. It is expected that the Kasuha case will soon be resolved, particularly in view of many indications that the French Government has decided to crack down on terrorist activities following the assassination last Monday in Paris of the American diplomat Charles Ray. The Elysee Palace has issued direct orders to French Security agencies to take all necessary measures to stem the wave of terrorism in France. A total of 13 assassinations and assassination attempts on foreign diplomats have taken place in France in the past 5-1/2 years, culminating in the assassination last November of the American diplomat Christian Chapman.

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9063

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SYRIA

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ATTEMPT TO SMUGGLE ARMS FOILED--On his most recent visit to Paris 3 weeks ago, Mr Rif'at al-Asad (brother of President al-Asad nearly precipitated a diplomatic crisis between France and Syria. When French security authorities learned that Mr al-Asad, accompanied by a group of armed bodyguards--some with sub-machineguns--was leading a motorcade from Geneva [Switzerland] to France, they sent a police delegation to meet him at the Swiss-French border. When French police insisted on searching the Syrians, the latter revealed their identities and produced diplomatic passports which give them immunity against police searches. At that, the officer in charge demanded that the Syrians surrender their weapons or return to Switzerland. After much debate and several telephone calls to the highest governmental authorities, the Syrian bodyguards returned to Switzerland, while Rif'at al-Asad, accompanied by only two of his bodyguards, was allowed to continue his trip to Paris. Three hours later, and to the surprise of French airport police, the Syrians, still armed, landed at Orly Airport. Informed of strict instructions to bar entry to any of them while armed, the "diplomats" finally surrendered their weapons and were permitted to enter France. The incident nearly precipitated a diplomatic crisis between the two countries. The French Foreign Ministry, acting through diplomatic channels, communicated its displeasure to the Syrian Government and warned against repetition of similar incidents. It also made clear to the Syrians that responsibility for protecting foreign visitors to France was the business of French police. A similar incident reportedly took place last year, causing widespread anger in French police circles. [Text] [Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 258, 22-28 Jan 82 p 17] [COPYRIGHT: 1981 AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI] 9063

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